



HIGGSY'S SPEED-DEVELOPER.

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

The Conductor Sets His Inventive Genius to Work in Order to Take His Girl to the Dance.

"TIGER" HANNIGAN put his red face inside the old loft room over the barn at the Blue Point terminal and howled for Conductor Hogan. Outside on the track, Hogan's motorman, on a full car, helped the starter by repeating his missing mate's name in the intervals when Hannigan paused to take breath.

The motorman had eleven trips between him and 9 P.M., and as that hour had been recorded in his mind as the time of his arrival at the Railroad Men's annual ball at Mulrooney's Hall, he was exceedingly annoyed. Besides, it was snowing hard; his feet were damp, and he had just discovered that his name was on the "Red List" on a charge of running his car over Sherman Avenue on "the loop."

The men sitting around the stove in the waiting-room looked up unconcernedly as Hannigan continued to yell the name of Hogan. They were waiting for their own run-numbers to be called, and took little interest in the daily hunt for crews that took the road before them.

"Any of you fellers see him?" cried the starter.

"Saw him in the feedery an hour ago," muttered "Smiler" Ferris. "He was cornerin' the cruller market."

"Hogan! Hogan! Where are you, Hogan?" roared Hannigan; and when he paused to listen, the motorman's supporting cry came in out of the street and echoed round the room as if seeking shelter from the storm.

Suddenly "Deaf" Monaghan shook himself and looked round wildly.

"Any one calling Hogan?" he asked. "I'm calling him!" screamed the starter. "Where is he?"

Monaghan kicked over his stool and rushed across the room.

"He's up here, experimentin' with that invention of his," he muttered as he reached the door of the attic. "He told me to tell him when his run-number was called, but I didn't hear it."

Hannigan's facial area was deep purple. "I'll give him inventions!" he yelled. "I'll teach him to have me roarin' his name like a court-crier!"

Then, as Hogan appeared on the ladder, he unloosed new threats. "You're for suspension to-morrow sure!" he

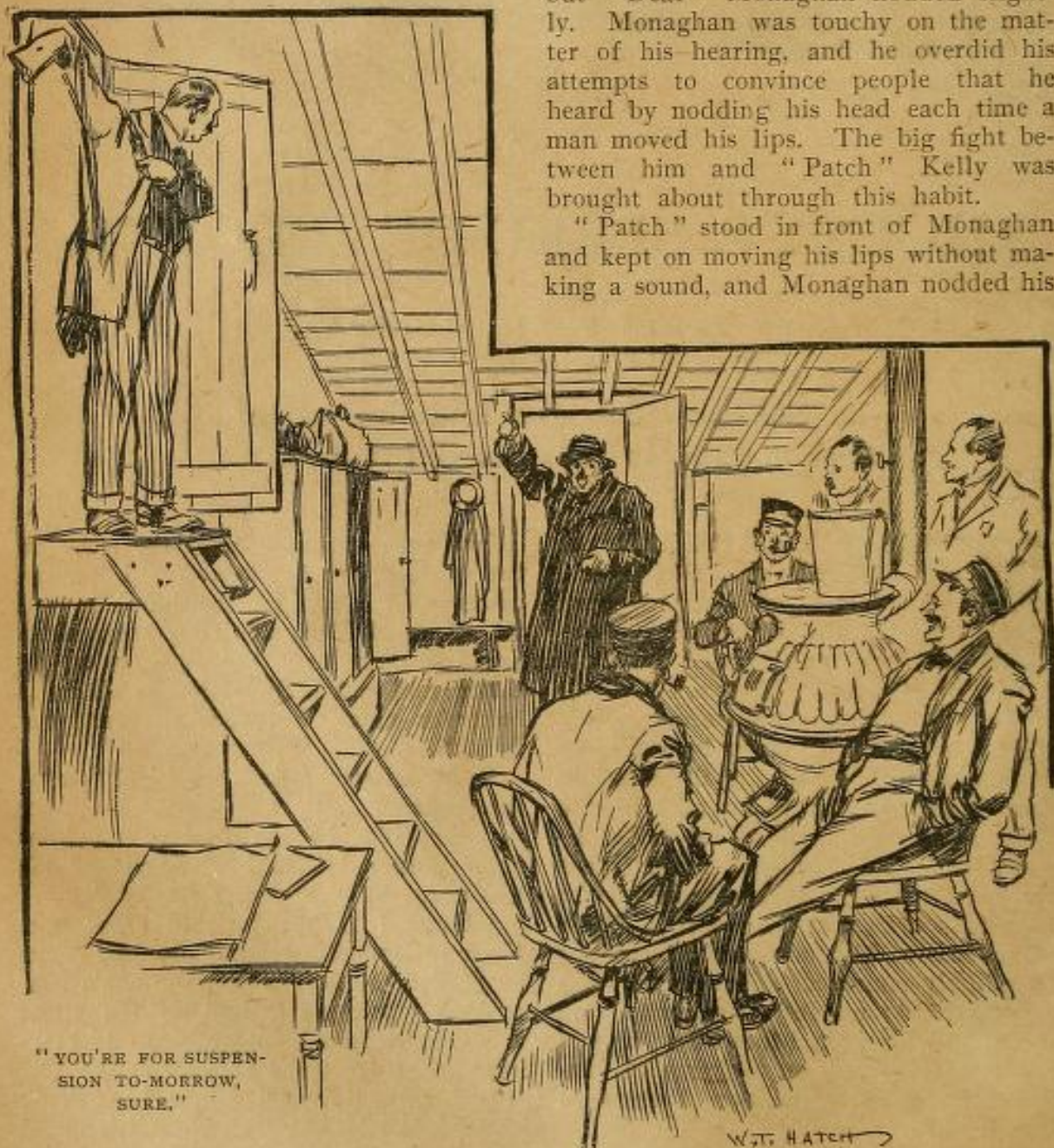
cried. "The road is all tied up! Jump onto that car; an' if I don't kill your inventin' bug inside twenty-four hours, my name isn't Hannigan."

He followed the conductor out into the storm, and his angry threats chased the car when the annoyed "mote" flung on the power and raced away up the snow-smothered track.

"Whizzer" Welch leaned over and poked the stove-fire industriously after the starter left the room, and then, addressing himself to the red coals, he remarked slowly: "It'll take more than Hannigan to root the inventin' bug out of a man's brain once it gets into it."

No one contradicted the statement, but "Deaf" Monaghan nodded slightly. Monaghan was touchy on the matter of his hearing, and he overdid his attempts to convince people that he heard by nodding his head each time a man moved his lips. The big fight between him and "Patch" Kelly was brought about through this habit.

"Patch" stood in front of Monaghan and kept on moving his lips without making a sound, and Monaghan nodded his



"YOU'RE FOR SUSPENSION TO-MORROW, SURE."

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head eleven times before the grins of the others convinced him that Kelly was making a fool of him. It was a costly trick for "Patch." After Monaghan had finished expostulating with him, he was unable to take his car out of the barn for three days.

"An inventor is born, just like a poet," continued Welch; "an' you might as well try to stop a frog from hoppin' as to keep 'em from corralin' the ideas that come into their thought-patches."

"I had a brother like that," murmured Dan Moran. "He went in for experimentin' with dynamite, an' he got nearer heaven than I'll ever get."

"Whizzer" Welch gave the fire another vicious prod and tilted his stool backward.

"I worked with an understudy to Thomas Edison once," he began. "Every morning he was in the line-up at the super's office, 'cause he wanted to demonstrate something that he had invented overnight, an' he kept that super busy side-steppin' the labor-savers. The super reckoned he wasn't a patent-agent, but that didn't feeze Higginson. He said his inventions were all for the good of the service, an' on that account the boss had to look 'em over."

"Higgsey had Nick Tesla and a few of the smaller idea-chasers tied to the fender of his little car, I tell you. He fixed up a patent grip that could lift old ladies and fat gents up on the platforms, but the boss didn't smile on that. He reckoned there weren't enough old females an' tubby guys in the town to warrant the expenditure, an' he told Higgsey to turn his brain to something that was really wanted. Higgsey admitted the logic, an' went out to clinch with what the boss called a long-needed want."

Hannigan put his head in the door and threw a run-plate at "Deaf" Monaghan to acquaint him that his turn had come, and Monaghan walked away regretfully, as if Welch's story, of which he hadn't heard a word, interested him mightily. "Whizzer" glanced at him, winked at the others, and continued his yarn:

"Higgsey came back next day with enough joy-creases on his face to fit out a wedding-party. He had an appyrtus like one of those cash-carriers in a department-store, an' his idea was to fix

one at every seat an' have a wire running to the tail-end of the car so that each passenger could send his nickel along to the junk-snatcher an' leave that person to look after the drunks and ancients getting on an' off.

"The super spun a cold eye on it, an' Higgsey came out of the office unravelin' the joy-furrows at full speed. He was pretty sick of the super. He let out round the depot that the boss wouldn't have enough imagination to see double if he was bringing home a load of whisky, an' some one put lemon-peel embellishments on the insult an' carried it along to his highness.

"That's how Higgsey got put on the horse-cars. He said he didn't mind, an' he reckoned he'd get some experience of horses, an' he reckoned right. The horse-line circumnavigated the town, an' it did little biz. There was only one car on the road, an' the horses that dragged it were the biggest lot of wasters from Baffin Bay to Patagonia.

"They didn't run to schedule, but sixteen circular trips was considered a day's work, an' the driver of Higgsey's car didn't care how long it took him to do it. He said he took the job because he had weak lungs an' wanted fresh air, an' he didn't study Higgsey a little bit when he gave his angs three or four hours extra in the open. He took a look at Higgsey the first day the conductor came on; an' he guessed he wasn't too strong in the lungs either, but the inventor didn't argue the point.

"The horses were the limit. They'd never take any notice of the go-ahead bell when they slowed up to take a passenger aboard, 'cause they had no faith in the judgment of a conductor. They'd just turn their heads an' watch till the passenger settled himself comfortably in his seat, an' then they'd move off at a walk, so that he could get used to the motion. Always before tackling an incline they'd stop an' ask each other if all was ready for the climb; an' the more Higgsey protested against the time he wasted the more the driver let 'em loaf.

"The inventor had a girl living a little way from the depot; an' when the sixteen trips got drawn out over so much time that he didn't have a minute to see her between knock-off and bedtime, he

got mad. He started to put his inventin' bug on the matter of horse speed, an' he gave the question some healthy consideration.

"He promised to take his girl to a dance on the fifth day that he was doing the merry-go-round stunt; an' as he promised to be at her place at nine o'clock he looked around for some trick that would stop the 'lunger' from stayin' on the road till midnight.

"At 'swing-time,' in the slack part of the afternoon, they had only finished ten trips, an' it looked as if Higgsey's girl would have to be her own escort, unless the horses were in a particularly out-of-the-way mood. The inventor doubted their ability to change their pace without cause, so he brought down an electric battery to the barn; an' before the driver harnessed up the mules he put the affair under a seat, and then ran a couple of wires under the car, and connected them with the steel bars of the swingletrees.

"Then he just waited.

"The mules started out at their usual 'Dead-March' step, and after they picked up four passengers at the depot they commenced to walk round the town, the 'lunger' drawin' big breaths in at every inch of the route. His doctor had ordered him to do the record-breakin' breathin' act on every opportunity; an' the mules seemed to understand that he couldn't do that while they were gallopin'.

"Half-way down the little hill from the depot one of 'em stopped to bite a thistle that was growin' near the track, an' just then Higgsey turned on the current. On account of it being a down-grade both of the mules were backin' against the swingletrees. It was their first introduction to electricity. They were pretty amazed.

"They looked at each other, as if they thought it a trick of the 'lunger,' but he was breathin' big, so they guessed it wasn't. Higgsey saw their surprised look, an' he turned it on a little stronger. They thought they had run against a nest of hornets or rattlers. The white mule that was chewin' the thistle dropped it out of his mouth an' lit out for the horizon at a gallop, an' the other fellow joined in.

"The driver got the astonishment-bug

in a bad form. He started out to spread some peaceful language over them, but they were leanin' on the bit in great style. The brake hadn't been used for twelve months, an' it wouldn't act; an' Higgsey just stood on the tail-end, an' made calculations on the speed they were travelin' at. The mules had come to the conclusion that somebody ridin' with the 'lunger' had tried to light a fire on their flanks, an' they didn't want to give him another opportunity.

"After a time some of the passengers wanted to get out, an' Higgsey gave the driver a bell to stop. The 'lunger' just give him a sickly grin, an' nodded to the mules. Higgsey gave him three bells; then he went out on the front platform to expostulate.

"'They won't stop,' said the driver. 'They're not boltin', but they've made up their minds they won't stop.'

"'I'll have to report you,' said Higgsey. 'Three ladies wish to get off, an' you won't stop.'

"'I can't!' yelled the 'lunger'; an' while he was arguin' the mules were doin' the Marathon of their lives.

"Higgsey started to note down the time an' place, an' then he went inside to quiet the three old women. The men had dropped off while he was talkin' with the driver, but the lady passengers were makin' affirmations that they'd sue the company for false imprisonment if the guy in front didn't get his team in hand.

"The driver just took no notice of the umbrellas and hands that waved to him from the sidewalk. The mules took no notice; an' every passenger they left behind Higgsey made a note of, an' warned the driver occasionally how strict the company was about runnin' away from fares.

"A copper man got on when they were half-way round, an' the driver got him to lend a hand on the reins. The cop was pretty strong, an' he steadied the mules down, but the moment he got off Higgsey turned on the current as they were going down another hill near the depot, an' the car didn't stop to report to the starter on that trip.

"It just tore by the depot like a runaway trolley, an' when the super saw it knockin' up the pace he nearly took a fit from astonishment. That team of

cattle had no eye for thistles on that run, an' they didn't pick up a passenger on the route.

"When they reached the depot, on the next time round, the starter an' the super rushed the horses as they were trottin' by, an' Higgsy put in his report against the 'lunger.' It was Higgsy's innings just then, an' he thought of all the hours that had been wasted through that feller doin' his big breathin' stunt in workin' hours. He showed how the company had lost two dollars an' thirty cents because the 'lunger' wasn't able to stop the bus, an' the boss swore he'd pull it off his paycheck.

"They changed horses then; an' another team that had never met electricity came out to take the place of the white mule an' his mate, who were still doin' a hard think tryin' to find out what had bit them. The new team started off on the old two-mile-an-hour pace.

"Just as they were going down the hill one of 'em sights the thistle that the white mule had dropped when the current bit him. This nag pulled up to get it, an' Higgsy gave him a shock that made him forget all the thistles in the United States.

"That team circumnavigated the town in seventeen minutes, an' that was the record. They thundered past the depot at a gait that would make Lou Dillon look pretty sick, an' Higgsy pretended to weep when he saw the super gapin' after them.

"He had the super on toast that evenin'. Every now and then he'd ring the bell sarcastic like, an' occasionally he'd go out an' ask the driver if he wouldn't pull up for a minute; an' the 'lunger' got that mad he promised to punch Higgsy silly the moment he got the mules

to stop. The super swung aboard at the depot; an' when he heard the driver's tale he took the reins from him an' started to steer the team himself. He pulled them up long enough to let a big German an' his wife get aboard; an' then Higgsy gave them another shock, an' the merry-go-round act started again.

The German was going to a party, an' when the car rushed by the place he wanted to stop at he began to make inquiries.



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"THE GERMAN'S WIFE GAVE HER HUSBAND A HELPING HAND."

"Higgsy said it was the fault of the driver. He reckoned that he was quite willing to pull up if the driver would, an' the German went out to argue the point with the boss. The super told him to mind his own business, an' the German did. He brought the boss a crack over the head with his umbrella, an' the 'lunger' had to take the reins again while the two were settlin' the matter on the floor of the car. The German's wife gave her husband a helping hand, an' the super got a pretty bad mauling before Higgsy an' a cop could separate them. Higgsy was havin' the time of his life, an' when he saw the boss an' the German

going off to the police station he nearly wept.

"The 'lunger' got off the car when they switched it into the barn to arrest the German an' the super, an' he reckoned he had enough of jigger-steerin' to last him for a week, so the starter took a hand. He told Higgys confidentially that he was the best horseman in his district when he was a youngster, an' he nearly believed he was tellin' the truth when he saw the way in which the new team acted.

"Then the inventor upset his pride. He gave the mokes a little dose of the fluid just to stop the starter's tongue, an' they tore around the township at a two-eleven gait. They hit a hand-cart and knocked it into little pieces, an' three mounted policemen and a fire-engine were chasin' them full speed when they were doin' the second time round the bailiwick.

"Higgys didn't want to go round for another trip, so he took the wires out an' wrapped up the battery in a sheet of newspaper. When they pulled up at the depot, he stepped off an' made out his run-card an' a few accident reports about the breakin' up of the hand-cart an' a collision with an ice-wagon, an' then he found he had two full hours to

get into his glad rags an' travel to the lady's home.

"But those six mules didn't forget that electric current for a while. Not one of 'em would stop to pick up a thistle or a bit of green grass for months afterward, an' the 'lunger' had to give up the deep-breathin' stunt 'cause they traveled too fast."

"How did the superintendent get on?" asked Moran.

"Oh, him," cried "Whizzer"; "he got fined ten dollars for assaultin' the fat German, an' Higgys celebrated so strong that he got fired. But he—"

The red face of Hannigan came in the door with a jerk.

"What's up with you, Welch?" he screamed angrily. "I've been calling you for the last ten minutes."

Welch picked up a coat and hurried out into the night, and the group around the stove relapsed into silence. Presently Dan Moran stood up and felt around for his top coat.

"Holy Moses," he cried, "me coat is gone! That lyin' feller whisked it away while I was thinkin' of the 'lectricity man an' the horse-car; but if I catch him between this an' Tuckapanna, I'll give him a bigger shock than the horses got."

WHEN ARMOUR WAS A SHACK.

GEORGE A. SHELDON, depot master of the Lake Shore station at Adrian, Michigan, who died recently, after forty-six years of continuous service with the Lake Shore Company, was a veritable encyclopedia of railroad incidents. His narrations were confined to actualities, thus giving them a real value, says the *Detroit News*. He was for many years a conductor, and among the best of the incidents he related the following:

"One day there stepped aboard my train a well-dressed, business-appearing man, who, as he tendered his fare, remarked:

"I see you are still on the road, Mr. Sheldon."

"Yes, I am still at it," I replied, "but I am not certain that I remember you, though I think I have seen you."

"Yes, you have seen me before," emphasized the passenger, "and while you doubtless have forgotten it, I still remember that you once did me the greatest favor of

my life. Come to my seat when you get time, and I will tell you about it."

"When I had finished collecting fares I dropped into the stranger's seat and he continued: 'Years ago I was four days brakeman on your train. At the end of the four days you took me aside and remarked in a tone of sympathy, "I am sorry to have to tell you so, but the fact is, young man, you are too much of a fool to ever make a good railroader. Take my advice and quit." I took your advice and went into other business, and the result is I have made a fair fortune. I thank you for your counsel.'

"What is your name?" I asked.

"Phil. D. Armour, of Chicago," replied my ex-brakeman, "and I shall always remember your kindness. I was a stupid railroader and you advised for my good."

"Until this interview," added Mr. Sheldon, "I never suspected that Phil. D. Armour, the packer, was the brakeman I discharged years before."